

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

By Travis Q. Lyday

Papua New Guinea comprises the eastern one-half of the island of New Guinea (which is the second largest island in the world), an archipelago of an additional three islands (Bougainville, New Britain, and New Ireland), and about 600 smaller islets, atolls, and coral reefs. The 463,000-square-kilometer (km²) nation, which includes 9,980 km² of territorial waters, is located east of Indonesia between the Coral Sea and the South Pacific Ocean and lies just north of the Australian continent.

According to the International Monetary Fund (2005¹), Papua New Guinea's gross domestic product (GDP) based on purchasing power parity was estimated to be about \$13.6 billion in 2004, and the GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity was calculated to be \$2,357. Historically, mining has played a prominent role in Papua New Guinea's economy. The first significant discovery of gold was made in 1888. Oil was discovered in 1922.

More-extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Papua New Guinea can be found in the 2002 U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Area Reports—International—Asia and the Pacific.

Internet Reference Cited

International Monetary Fund, 2005 (September), Papua New Guinea, World Economic Outlook Database, accessed February 15, 2006, via URL <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2005/02/data/index.htm>.

¹A reference that includes a section mark (§) is found in the Internet Reference Cited section.

TABLE 1
PAPUA NEW GUINEA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

Commodity ²		2000	2001	2002	2003 ^e	2004 ^e
Copper, mine output, Cu content	metric tons	203,061	203,762	204,000	205,500 ^{r, 3}	177,200 ³
Gas, natural	million cubic meters	1,438	1,434	1,450 ^e	1,450	1,450
Gold, mine output, Au content	kilograms	74,540	67,043	70,000	58,000 ^r	67,000
Natural gas liquids	42-gallon barrels	224,857	186,190	200,000 ^e	200,000	200,000
Petroleum, crude	thousand 42-gallon barrels	24,967	20,423	20,000 ^e	20,000	20,000
Silver, mine output, Ag content	kilograms	79,197	69,368	73,000	38,000 ^r	51,000

^eEstimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. ^rRevised.

¹Includes data available through November 1, 2005.

²In addition to the commodities listed, cement and crude construction materials (common clays, sand and gravel, and stone) are produced, but available general information is inadequate to make reliable estimates.

³Reported figure.